

**Thomas Jefferson to Peter Charles L'Enfant, August 18, 1791, from Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital.
Edited by Saul K. Padover.**

Jefferson to L'Enfant

Philadelphia, August 18, 1791.

TO MAJOR L'ENFANT

Sir

The President had understood for some time past that you were coming on to Philadelphia and New York, and therefore has delayed mentioning to you some matters which have occurred to him. Will you be so good as to inform me by return of post whether it is still your purpose to come this way, and when, that the President may thereon decide whether he will communicate his ideas by letter, or await your coming to do it by word? If you are detained by laying out the lots, you had better not await that, as a suggestion has been made here of arranging them in a particular manner, which will probably make them more convenient to the purchasers, and more profitable to the sellers. A person applied to me the other day on the subject of engraving a map of the federal territory. I observed to him that if yourself or Mr. Ellicott chose to have this done, you would have the best right to it—do either of you intend this? If you do I would suggest to you the idea of doing it on a square sheet to hang corner upwards, thus the outlines being N.W. N.E. S.E. & S.W. the meridian will be vertical as they ought to be; the streets of the city will be horizontal and vertical, and near the center, the Potomac and Eastern branch will be nearly so also; there will be no waste in the square sheet of paper. This is suggested merely for your consideration. I am with much esteem Sir &c.

Library of Congress

Th: Jefferson.

[Ms., p. 278, AMERICAN LETTERS, Vol. IV, 1788–92, State Department Archives in the National Archives; p. 174, u.s. v. SMITH.]